2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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case, while exogamy is generally observed, the association of particular groups of men and animals seems to make no great emotional appeal to the Shilluk—to be but little loaded with affect—compared with the similar feelings among the Dinka. We may also refer to the suggestion put forward by Hofmayr,[1] that the incoming Shilluk had a definite totemic system, which became less important as the cult of Nyakang developed and the newcomers mixed with the earlier inhabitants of what is now the Shilluk country. Evidence for or against this hypothesis may be forthcoming when we know more of the beliefs of the Luo and Anuak. We therefore leave the subject with the observation that the existence of a partial totemism of the Dinka pattern among the Shilluk would be explained if the earlier inhabitants absorbed by Nyakang and his horde—it will be remembered that these included animals which he turned into men—were Dinka, or folk with kindred beliefs.

Dr. Tucker has given us some interesting information which, though it does not actually concern totemism, might at first sight be confused with it and is worthy of further investigation. The inhabitants of a village, Pathuor, mark a scorpion several inches in length in raised cicatricial tissue on the shoulder—left for men and right for women so that it is not hidden by the shoulder cloth. The reason they give is that they "desire to cultivate the strength of the scorpion"; yet they kill without scruple scorpions that they find in their huts. Other designs scarred on the shoulder, described by Dr. Tucker, include the horse, tortoise, aeroplane, and the sun. He regards the custom as a result of a village quarrel. One village, Paulo, decided that it would no longer eat the fish *akok*, because the village Pajur, with which it was at enmity, is situated at the edge of a creek where many *akok* are caught. The Paulo proceeded to represent an *akok* in raised cicatrices on the shoulder; Pajur retaliated by avoiding lemons—because Paulo, living near the mission, grows lemons—and they scarred lemons on their shoulders. This was about a year ago; goodwill now reigns between the villages, and consequently the *akok* and the lemon are no longer avoided.

Turning now to the king and royal family, we would emphasize that the Shilluk king is the supreme spiritual and temporal ruler, and that to separate his functions—as for the sake of clarity we are about to do—is an artificial device. Nevertheless, we shall now

[1] Op. cit., 133.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 [1909-1910] 1932
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643 796 homestead, and is speared by an *awwo* after the king has marked it with a spear, or perhaps made passes over it, the beast being dragged away to fall probably outside the shrine of Nyakang.

This brings the installation proper to an end, and the king, waited on by the *nyo kwar*, enters the homestead, where he should remain [715] some ten days in solemn communion with Nyakang whose spirit he now incarnates.

On the tenth night the king is taken by the *awwo* to his rebuilt "palace" on the mound Anurwic, and lives there for a month in retirement. When he comes down from the mound there is again a sham fight, in which he vanquishes his opponent, and he is now the acknowledged king.[1] A beast is sacrificed, and the chiefs present make oration on the rights and duties of the ruler, each emphasising his words by brandishing his spear and thrusting it into the ground at the close of his speech. The king replies, promises to be a just ruler, to punish wrong and to protect the weak, and dismisses his people after exhorting them to remain true to Nyakang and to their ancient customs.

The three newly built huts which were occupied by the king are broken down (perhaps by the *awwo*) and their fragments thrown into the river.

We believe that the installation of a new *reth* generally takes place about the middle of the dry season. It was said that the Akurwa party and "Nyakang" stay at Fashoda for some time, until about the beginning of the rains. On leaving Fashoda a bullock is sacrificed, and a sheep is killed before crossing every khor on the way back. On arriving at Akurwa four or five of the cattle presented by the *reth* are sacrificed, and the bones thrown into the river.

771 The third element in the Shilluk religion is the cult of ancestors (other than those of the royal family). We confess that we feel unable to set this forth in due proportion and perspective. For [771] while it is certainly true to say that the ancestral cult is overshadowed by the cult of Nyakang, and that if it ever existed in any such form and degree as among the Dinka it is now but a remnant of what it ● [781] once was, yet we are convinced that there is very much more feeling for and fear of dead ancestors than appears on the surface. We have

[1] Pagis, the present king, left his temporary homestead on the third night and came down from his palace on the mound the next morning. For a rather confused account of what happened then, given to Mr. Munro by an Egyptian officer—not apparently himself an eye-witness—see Mr. Munro's article (our Appendix) already quoted.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 F723 Shilluk F723

756 791 793 [794]

a man by witchcraft, to prevent rain, and to cause the cattle to be barren. — There exist two kinds of sorcerers, the one whose functions are just mentioned, who plays an important and mostly humiliant rôle in public life and the official religion of the community, and another one whose doings are secret and who works for mischief. If this latter is convicted of his evil doings, he may be severely fined, or even sentenced to death. — Besides these the word *jal pyq* "man of medicine" is sometimes used; whether this is a synonym to *opidyo*, or whether it designates still a third class of "witch"-, or ordinary "doctor", I do not know.

When possessed by a spirit (or by Jwok?) the sorcerers become ecstatic; SORCERY 781
the same seems to be the case with a newly elected king; here it seems to be the spirit of Nyikang, which falls on his followers, vide page 149.

The texts contain many mythological tales and allusions, which may in former MYTHOLOGY 973
times have formed part of the strictly religious belief of the people, but exist now merely as historical traditions, without having any active meaning to the present generation; this domain of their mental life is, however, not sufficiently known as yet to allow a decisive judgement. A reminiscence of sun-service is evident from 11, page 166. The Nile and Sobat are populated by water-people, who in figure are partly like men, partly like crocodiles or fish. They had, in the past, many intercourse with men. — According to some older writers the spirits of the Nile are worshipped. They have their own cattle-herds, which live with them in and on the banks of the Nile. They often dive up from the water, chiefly in misty weather. When a cow is fished out of the river, it is placed under the protection of the Nile-spirits and the sun-god *.

The Shilluks have two expressions which may be translated by "soul" or SOUL, SPIRIT 974
"spirit" of a living person: *wei* and *ojoŋ*; *wei* means "breath", and in the life-giving factor in man; the meaning of *ojoŋ* is "shadow" of a man, or "image", as seen when looking into clear, still water. — The spirit of a dead person is called *oupiy*; the word is derived from *upy* to kill; *oupiy* probably means "one who kills", or "who is killed". The *oupiy* is feared.

On the abode of deceased persons the Shilluks have but vague ideas; in one ABODE OF THE DECEASED 975
of the texts the dead are called "the people of the village of God", *jit pit jwok*. Whether they have a general belief in a life after death, is not known.

Islam does up to now not find much sympathy with the Shilluks. They ISLAM 177
prefer their own religion to that of foreigners. Only a few people who have for a longer time lived in close touch with Mohammedans, chiefly those who have served as soldiers, adopt the religion of Mohammed, or at least wear Mohammedan amulets beside their own charms. It is admirable that these people, Shilluks, Dinkas Anywaks, and Nuers, though having lived for centuries side 771 747

* This doubtlessly relates to the cows of Nyikang, vide the preceding.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

judge, for, as the source of both good and evil, he can be regarded as indifferent, or friendly, or hostile, according to the judgement of the individual in any particular situation. His existence is taken for granted, and what people know or think of him does not alter nor define nor limit him. It is suggested by Hofmayr that the idea of punishment for wrong done is connected rather with the dissatisfied dead and with the ancestors than with the direct action of God. It is they who bring it about that God punishes the guilty.[1] Such beliefs are accompanied with very little elaboration of ideas about the state of the dead. Stories about the land of the dead, where all is quiet, as it is in the Shilluk capital of Fashoda, seem to represent fancies rather than traditionally formulated beliefs. The dead are in some sense nearer to God than are the living for they exist increasingly in a world of ideas, as the impressions they left upon their descendants become fainter with the passage of time; but, as another Shilluk proverb says, 'man does not think about death'. They pray that they may be helped in this life.

Association of Nyikang with Light and Knowledge

Mention was made earlier of a contest between Dak and Dimo, in which Dak struck his opponents blind, until they accepted his superiority, when he restored their sight. The same story is sometimes told of Nyikang and Duwat.[2] Since Nyikang and Dak represent the way in which the Shilluk know the order of their world, as well as being themselves examples of knowledge and intelligence, it is appropriate that the power to blind people should be attributed to them in myth. Another myth tells how Nyikang, in order to capture some sorcerers for his country, covered the earth with a shadow so that they could not see anything.[3] This association of Nyikang with seeing and light, and thus, I suggest, with knowledge and understanding, occurs again in the belief that Nyikang sometimes shows himself in dreams as a bright light;[4] he appears also, among other forms, as a white bull. Dak and other kings appear also in the form of a white egret. The logic of this symbolism is not specifically examined in the literature, but in Shilluk thought there seems to be some association between light and sight, and Nyikang and the kings. In the installation ceremonies of 1943, we are told that 'all objects of great sanctity were covered in white cloth . . . with all cattle [for sacrifice] it was evident how careful the Shilluk were to see that the animal was blindfold'.[5] At the conclusion of the sacrifices which marked the stages towards the complete installation of the king, then representing Nyikang, these wrappings were torn off. The significance of this may be partly that such objects, which are holy, are also dangerous to ordinary men who must be protected from them. In the installation ceremonies, the Shilluk fled when they supposed that Nyikang had come, and again fled from the effigy of Dak, with 'a mixture of fear and laughter'.[6] One

[1] Ibid., p. 230.
[2] Westermann, 1912, p. 168.
[3] Howell and Thomson, 1946 p. 56.
[4] Oyler, 1928, iii, p. 108.
[5] Seligman, 1932, p. 76.
[6] Ibid., p. 66.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

theme of these ceremonies was the avoidance of Nyikang and a fear of his power, accompanied by the veiling of the objects particularly associated with him. The complexity of this behaviour, particularly the 'fear and laughter', demands a more penetrating analysis than is possible here.

Conclusion

In such a brief account it has been possible to give only an outline of the cosmological ideas and social values of the Shilluk, and it has been inevitable also that these should have been somewhat over-formalized and systematized. Shilluk cosmological ideas are embedded in belief and action. They are not systematized by the people themselves, who reveal them only by their sayings and their behaviour. It is impossible to give an account of them without abstracting them from the reality, formulating them as ideas with a certain degree of coherence between them, and thus constructing a system which has no exact counterpart in the thought of the Shilluk themselves. Such an account is bound to show, here and there, that effort to achieve consistency which is part of our tradition, but not of theirs. I have tried to show how the order known to the Shilluk is dependent upon their belief in a mythical hero and king, Nyikang, who is the figure to which every subsequent Shilluk king is assimilated in thought. This assimilation is enacted in the ritual for the installation of each new king. Nyikang is an analogue, for the Shilluk, of the power which created and maintains the universe. That power, which I have been content to call God, is of greater importance to the Shilluk as a source of vitality, both intellectual and physical, than as a being with ethical attributes. Nyikang and the kings similarly belong not to an ethical, but to a metaphysical system. Shilluk religion is concerned with the maintenance, as a divine order, of the order in which they live and have always lived. The kings, and Nyikang, are held to represent that order, which without them would not exist. The death of a king and the installation of his successor, are therefore of critical importance in the Shilluk kingdom, and that importance is marked by ceremonies of great imaginative and symbolic richness. The importance and uniqueness of the king is similarly emphasized by the existence of a special vocabulary used of him, and by various special observances which may be studied in the literature. They mark him off from ordinary men, no less than his titles—'first-born of God', 'child of God', 'reflection of the ancestors', 'master of the world', 'last-born of God', and others.[1] Any particular king, however, is also, as an individual human being, to some degree unequal to the office. The Shilluk have no superstitious reverence for the individual human king, and many kings have been removed by violent death when, for one reason or another, their people have tired of them. It is, perhaps, chiefly after the climax of the installation ceremonies that the dignity of the office, and the human nature

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 130. The 'first-born' and the 'last-born' have special status, at least in Dinka thought, because the first 'opens the way' for the others, while the other 'closes the way'. They are, so to speak, the alpha and omega of generation.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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1. Since the well-being of the Shilluk tribe depends so necessarily on the very existence of the *reth* and every action he takes, the death of a *reth* and the installation of a successor must be most carefully regulated by ritual and religious observances. [643]

2. The occasion demands strict observance of all the rites and ceremonies necessary to carry the tribe no less than their figure-head from one status to another. A false step will cause disaster to the tribe.

3. The period of the interregnum is one of intense danger for the Shilluk tribe. Spiritually it is dangerous, because there is no human symbol of tribal cohesion. The *reth* is "out of status"; the whole tribe is in a like position. The soul of Nyikang is without a home. The newly appointed *reth* will later incarnate the spirit of Nyikang, but he does not yet possess fully the divine attributes which have the effect among his people of stabilizing his position. To the Shilluk the political situation also is full of potential danger because civil war may break out at any moment over the choice of a successor. Even after the new *reth* has been appointed by the traditional college of chiefs, his life is endangered and every effort must be made to safeguard him. [715] [669]

4. Therefore each stage in the burial and installation ceremonies successfully concluded is yet another crisis passed. Emotional tension is manifest throughout—a rise and fall of political and religious feeling until the final climax is reached when the new *reth* is confirmed in his position by the homage of the temporal heads of the country. Although the Sudan Government did not intervene either in the choice of the new *reth* or in the form or timing of the events, the Shilluk knew well enough that no blood-shed would be tolerated. How much greater then must [791] [548]

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1946) 1946
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643 this emotional tension and political excitement have been in the past.

[781] 5. Although many of the Shilluk treated the ceremonies light-heartedly and on occasions with much laughter, deep in their hearts was a profound respect for their own religious beliefs and a feeling of awe at the presence of Nyikang.

[778] 6. Despite the stormy path of recent Shilluk history in which *reths* were assassinated, hanged and exiled by an alien government, and despite the disintegrating influences of civilisation, the continuity of tradition and the pious attempt to follow it was remarkable.[1]

182 693 695 7. The songs and ceremonies were characterised by a marked anti-Dervish attitude which dates back to the persecution of the Shilluk and their rulers by the followers of the Mahdi. The facts show that these attacks increased rather than weakened the unity of the tribe and indeed, strengthened the institution of the *reth* as the symbol of tribal cohesion in the face of opposition.

104 It is sometimes difficult to translate Shilluk terms accurately and concisely into English. Original Shilluk terminology is therefore used extensively in the text. The following Shilluk terms are consistently employed:—

Reth: The "king" of the Shilluk.

Nyireth: A son (or daughter) of a *reth*.

Kwa: Literally "descendants of", refers to a clan and precedes the name of the clan. Thus *Kwa Okelo* "the descendants of Okelo", *Kwa Reth* "the descendants of the *Reth*."

Nyikang and Dak: Tribal heroes of the Shilluk. The first king of the Shilluk and his son.

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1. Cf. P. Munro, "Installation of the Reth of the Chol," *S.N.R.* Vol. i. pp. 141 ff. (and reproduced in full in C. G. Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, Appendix I.)

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-S (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

contingents of Fashoda began to come in and marched around the outskirts of the village. The various performances carried out by each group did not vary to any appreciable extent except perhaps in the order. The main events recorded were :-

The warriors, (Note 6) with shields, spears and sticks, entered the arena regimented with remarkable discipline into their sections. They first marched round the outside of the village, sometimes kneeling down as a body and beating their shields with their spears. They then moved in procession round the drums, turned to face them and danced with a jumping motion in a circle round them, with their spears raised. They then turned to the tomb of the late *reth* and, mingling with the women who were standing outside and singing the songs of Fafiti, knelt in homage towards him, sometimes beating their shields and clapping hands in time to the drums. The word *wee*, the traditional form of opening a conversation with the *reth*, was repeated by all at certain points in the song. They then arose and advanced round the village, once more visiting the houses of the late *reth* in turn, some of them peering inside the doors as if seeking for him. They then marched outside the village, and another contingent of warriors entered to take their turn.

Twice during the day, there was a spontaneous panic, and the crowds fled shrieking from the village. The explanation given was that the spirit of the late *reth* had been brought back by Nyikang and was now in their midst. Hands were clapped to drive the spirit away. The attitude of the Shilluk to this supposed phenomenon is important. There is no doubt that they were seized with fear, and fled as if the devil were behind them, but it was also regarded as a joke, and they all laughed heartily immediately afterwards. This mixture of fear and laughter is also characteristic of their flight from the effigy of Liuk, which is described later. The panic was not started by any particular signal except that on both occasions someone heard somebody say "Nyikang has appeared."

The ceremonial dancing performed by the warriors and others, and the panic at the arrival of the departed spirit were repeated without

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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obvious variation on the second day, though different contingents took part. On each day, at the close of the ceremonies the drummers whisked the drums from their holes and rushed them out of the village. This was a signal to the dancers to disperse, and they did so with great speed and with mock terror. The spirit of the late *reth* was said to return on the drums being drawn, and hands were clapped by the onlookers as before. On the last day, the holes in which the drums had been set up were immediately filled, and water poured over the spot, and a sheep was brought to the site. This sheep was not immediately sacrificed, but was ceremonially purified and led off to be slaughtered elsewhere.

PART II—ELECTION OF THE RETH

(W.P.G.T.)

The *reth* of the Shilluk is elected from the body of surviving sons of those previous *reths* who have been properly installed in Fashoda. Difficulties arose in recent elections owing to pretenders seeking the throne, who were the sons of men who, although they were proclaimed *reth* by the government or compassed Fashoda of their own accord, had never been installed by Nyikang.

In 1943 these "illegitimate" lines had died out, and all *nyiretks* were genuinely eligible for the position of *reth*.

Apart from the law that all *reths* must be the sons of previous *reths*, there is no other rule governing the election. It is more or less understood now, though not in former times, that surviving lines of *nyiretks* take it in turn to provide a *reth*, though we think agreement has to be obtained for this. The families of three *reths*, Fadiet, Fadiet and Kur contained among them some thirty or forty *nyiretks* all technically eligible for election excluding infant children of Fadiet. In 1943, the two surviving sons of *reth* Yor were not considered owing to old age (one of them had left the Shilluk country some years pre-

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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so many cows, sheep, spears, etc., and now the people were thrusting themselves upon Nyikang to make sure these things would be delivered to them. They were begging Nyikang to speak to them and assure them that the things would be forthcoming. In all the ceremonies I witnessed the element of begging was paramount, the people begging Nyikang to speak to them and promise them "things of the earth" to enrich them. The element of worship and adoration was singularly lacking. (Note 14)

After this song everyone turned their backs to the opening of the *kal* (enclosure), and the drums started to beat again. This time the people were silent, and soon Dak appeared and came out of the enclosure. Dak was about twelve feet high, carried on a long bamboo pole. The body of the figure was about eighteen inches long and approximately five inches thick, of a cylindrical shape wrapped about with blue and white checked cloth. It was crowned with a splendid plume of ten to dozen ostrich feathers, all black. Dak was carried by a middle aged man, and I was told that he would receive 'great riches' for his work, probably three or four cows. Dak circled the house three times and then came to rest again at the entrance. At this time two sheep were sacrificed, one at the door of the *kal* and the other beside the road in the direction of Fashoda. These sheep were allowed to lie where their throats had been cut, but I noticed later that, as soon as the procession had passed, the women of the village went out and dragged them in to be eaten.

As Dak stood at the entrance, the drums changed their beat and everyone began to chant "*Kwaa*, you are great". Then Nyikang appeared out of the house and took his place beside Dak. He was carried by a man of middle age. Nyikang was much larger in body than Dak, though not nearly so tall. I estimated the body of the figure as being about five feet long and a foot thick. It was wrapped in the same cloth as Dak and crowned with a much more profuse plume of ostrich feathers. Two long streamers fell away from the head and

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

country to the north, a distance of about one hundred and sixty miles. Here, with the help of Mr. J. L. Baker and Mr. J. O. Udal, I can only supplement our previous accounts by recording actual observations made on this occasion with additional information from Shilluk who attended. Mr. Baker was unfortunately transferred to another district a few days before the final ceremonies.

Before describing the events as they occurred on this occasion, it will be as well to summarize the main features of the ceremonies according to traditional practice. In the installations of the various Shilluk reths of which we have records there has been no great deviation from the general principles and what differences are found concern the actual timing and minor observances in ritual.

The rule of Nyikang

We have already seen that when the soul of Nyikang has finally left the person of the last reth, he appears in village at Akurwa. This village, together with that of Dak, seat of Nyikang, made of bamboo and ambrella surrounded by huge planters of sacred bamboos', sometimes appear in public during the lifetime of a reth: normally they are dormant and their principal functions are concerned with the installation ceremonies. Nyikang is everywhere, but for the moment his personality is concentrated in this village. To the Shilluk the village is Nyikang, as does in all our accounts we have always spoken of Nyikang meaning both the village and the spirit: the two are indistinguishable. Throughout the ceremonies the villages are visited by the Shilluk with a mixture of hilarity and dread, mixed emotions which are always apparent. When all the preparations have been completed, Nyikang and Dak are carried back from the shrine at Akurwa and lead the hounds of Shilluk country to the north. They are carried by men of the Ayo Nyikwam and surrounded by a bodyguard of the same clan armed with whips to clear the people from their path. They then march southwards on Fashodo.

The flight of the reth to Debab

As soon as the reth hears that Nyikang draws near, he abandons the capital and comes to the village of Debab a few miles south of Aswanian, the watercourse which is the boundary between the two ceremonial divisions of Shilluk country, Gol Dhiang (the north) and Gol Nyikang (the south). These divisions are of great importance in the installation ceremonies and on other occasions have no real significance. The reth is always supported in the ceremonial hostilities which follow by the occupants of Gol Nyikang, and Nyikang, in his march from Akurwa to Fashodo is supported by Gol Dhiang, and literally "homeward," and a word used to describe the southern country of Shilluk society, being strictly means "home" or "country of." The origin of these two divisions is hypothetical and the names themselves have no direct connection with the ceremonial opposition displayed during the installation. The two ceremonial divisions do not correspond exactly (though nearly) with similar divisions, Core and Lush, which have a periodic significance in quite another context[1]. At Debab, the reth remains in strict seclusion for three days, guarded by day and night, and the village is not open to anyone who is not a personal attendant or from the divisions of Gol Nyikang. The belief that he is in danger is expressed in a number of ways, including the lighting of fires all round the village at night and the fact that although a special house is built and most carefully decorated in the most manner as modern huts, he actually sleeps in one of the most dilapidated and low conspicuous houses.

[1] See Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[2] Howell & Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 75 (2).

27: Munro U-5 (1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Observation here was very difficult owing to the curtain, the moving crowd, and the fact that the Ret's most ancient wife would keep on dancing in front of the only possible view.

I therefore moved my position to where I noticed some ancient crones, who were past the age of reverence and merely inquisitive, and from which place one could see behind the curtain. Shortly after I had moved the Ret's *wanir* was called for: he was Yomon wod Ker (Kwanieret). Nyakang was then withdrawn by his attendant backwards and the Ret took his seat on the sacred stool. His *wanir* then grasped the two front feet of the stool presumably in token of the submission and fealty of the Shilluk race, and in recognition that Nyakang's mantle had descended upon him.

Then occurs much tomtoming and dancing, in which the people concerned are wives of the Ret and people of Akurwa, while the Ret sat like a graven image on the chair. At this time I noticed smoke issuing from the temporary table and asked what it was for. I was informed that the Ret's wives were warming water for the ablutions. Presently when this was ready two or three of them came and washed the new Ret's feet in hot and cold water, the significance of which is that the Ret shall be neither too cold nor too hot with his people, i. e. just.

The Ret was then lifted up by the Orore and carried to where a bull covered with a leopard skin had been brought by Kwa Ujalo[1] on the threshold of his "temporary hut". He appeared to make certain passes, four in number, over this with a large sword, which was handed to him. The bull was then speared and carried away struggling for a short distance, and the Ret was then taken to his hut, which ended the proceedings temporarily. As we left the scene, the sacred stool was carried past us by four men running and taken up to the Ret's palace on the mound.

I was told Fofiti was to stay in his temporary hut for three days, and at the end of that period is taken up to his palace.

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[1] Kwa Ujalo is probably identical with Kwa Ajal, who were founded by Jal. They live at Kpal Wak and lay out the circle for building the house of Nyakang (cp. Westermann, p. 108 also list compiled by Rev. B. Oyler of Dakalo Hill). Local tradition says they have the right given them by Nyakang of taking captives any girls they may meet and holding them to ransom.

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

find. Why do you leave the responsibility of saving on God alone? God's spirit becomes tired (from work), and he leaves people, and they die. Why do you not see and save us? You went to the ground, and you have forgotten that a person from another house does not guard yours."

The prayer is continued in this strain until the sheep, responding to the necessity of nature, relieves itself, and that is taken as an omen that the prayer has been heard, and a favourable answer will be given. That which comes from the sheep is put on the grave. If the omen is delayed, the sheep may be taken to a house, and left there to be brought out another day. The prayer life among the Shilluks is developed by adversity, as they seldom if ever pray, when in prosperous circumstances.

Their veneration of Nikaang does not blind their eyes to his faults. When a prayer has been offered to Nikaang, and the answer is not given as had been hoped, the disappointed one curses Nikaang. That is true especially in the case of death. When death is approaching, they sacrifice to Nikaang and God, and pray that death may be averted. If the death occurs the bereaved ones curse Nikaang, because he did not exert himself in their behalf. Apparently they do not pray to him that the condition of the deceased may be happy after death. He is sometimes spoken of as the son of God, but it is not definite, as they also use the same term in regard to his father, and one or two others.

They maintain that Nikaang still lives. He is even now watching over the Shilluks, and should he die the whole race would die, but in spite of their belief they have a sacred house for Nikaang, which is similar to the sacred houses in which the later kings have been buried. This fact weakens their statement that they believe that he still lives.

The departed leader comes back to his country on certain occasions. At night he can be heard in the sacred house, which has been dedicated to him. He sharpens his spear, or beats with his club, but when the attendants enter the house, no visible form is to be seen, but they know that the sounds were made by him. He may also ring a bell that is in the sacred house. When he is heard in the sacred house, the Shilluks say: "Nikaang walks in his country". They rejoice because it is an indication that he is actively watching over his people.

When the rains do not begin as soon as the natives think they should